

ARIZONA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Fifty-seventh Legislature - Second Regular Session

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Report of Regular Meeting
Tuesday, January 13, 2026

House Hearing Room 1 -- 2:00 P.M. OR UPON RECESS OR ADJOURNMENT OF FLOOR

Convened 2:01 P.M.

Recessed

Reconvened

Adjourned 4:22 P.M.

RECEIVED
CHIEF CLERKS OFFICE

JAN 16 2026

Members Present

Representative Abeytia
Representative Biasiucci
Representative Fink
Representative Garcia
Representative Gutierrez
Representative Hernandez
Representative Marshall, Sr.
Representative Olson
Representative Rivero
Representative Simacek
Representative Peña, Vice-Chairman
Representative Gress, Chairman

Members Not Present

Agenda

Original Agenda – Attachment 1

Request to Speak

Report – Attachment 2

Committee Attendance

Report – Attachment 3

Presentations

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Attachments (Handouts)</u>
Credit Enhancement Eligibility Board Presentation	Governor's Office, Catcher Baden, Director of Legislative Affairs	4
Credit Enhancement Eligibility Board Sunset Review Vote		5
Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education Presentation	WICHE, Demi Michelau, President	6

Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education Sunset Review Vote		7
School Safety Program Presentation	Auditor General's office	8
School Safety Program	Arizona Department of Education	9

Committee Action

<u>Bill</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Vote</u>	<u>Attachments</u>
HB2142	DP	6-4-1-1	10,11

Alexis Estrada, Committee Secretary
January 16, 2026

(Original attachments on file in the Office of the Chief Clerk; video archives available at <http://www.azleg.gov>)

REVISED - 1/12/26

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ARIZONA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Fifty-seventh Legislature - Second Regular Session

Convened: 2:01pm
Adjourned: 4:22pm

REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

DATE Tuesday, January 13, 2026

ROOM HHR 1

TIME 2:00 P.M. or upon recess or adjournment of Floor

Members of the public may access a livestream of the meeting here:
<https://www.azleg.gov/videoplayer/?clientID=6361162879&eventID=2026011009>

Members:

Representative Abeytia
Representative Biasiucci
Representative Fink
Representative Garcia

Representative Gutierrez
Representative Hernandez L
Representative Marshall
Representative Olson

Representative Peña
Representative Rivero
Representative Simacek
~~Representative Taylor, Vice-Chairman~~
Representative Peña, Vice-Chairman
Representative Gress, Chairman

- 1. Welcome and Introductions
- 2. Bills

Bills	Short Title	Strike Everything Title
<u>HB2142</u>	<u>DP</u> ADE; school safety; center; programs (Gress)	
<u>6-4-1-1</u>	ED, RULES	

Acting as the House Education Committee of Reference

1. Sunset Review of the Credit Enhancement Eligibility Board
 - a. Presentation by the Credit Enhancement Eligibility Board
 - b. Public Testimony
 - c. Discussion and Recommendation
2. Sunset Review of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education
 - a. Presentation by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education
 - b. Public Testimony
 - c. Discussion and Recommendation
3. Review of the Arizona Department of Education – School Safety Program Performance Audit
 - a. Presentation by the Office of the Auditor General
 - b. Response by the Arizona Department of Education
 - c. Public Testimony
 - d. Discussion

ORDER OF BILLS TO BE SET BY THE CHAIRMAN

RA
01/12/2026

People with disabilities may request reasonable accommodations such as interpreters, alternative formats, or assistance with physical accessibility. If you require accommodations, please contact the Chief Clerk's Office at (602) 926-3032 or through Arizona Relay Service 7-1-1.

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Please PRINT Clearly

Committee on Education

Bill Number 2142 / COR

Date 1/13

Support Oppose Neutral

Name Mike Kortenbach

Need to Speak? Yes No

Representing ADE

Are you a registered lobbyist? _____

Complete Address _____

E-mail Address _____ Phone Number _____

Comments: _____

FIVE-MINUTE SPEAKING LIMIT

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM FOR THE PUBLIC RECORD



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Please PRINT Clearly

Committee on 1/13/26 Education Bill Number 2142

Date 1/13/26 Support Oppose Neutral

Name Alexis Susdorf Need to Speak? Yes No

Representing Greenway Property Gd Man Council Are you a registered lobbyist? Y

Complete Address 3109 E. Greenway St., Mesa AZ 85213

E-mail Address alexis@state48pa.com Phone Number 480 278 2973

Comments: _____

*****FIVE-MINUTE SPEAKING LIMIT*****

Information Registered on the Request to Speak System

House Education (1/13/2026)

HB2142, ADE; school safety; center; programs

Support:

Shirley Dye, representing self; Stephen Harris, representing self; Buffalo Rick Galeener, representing self; Michelle Dillard, representing self; Shelli Boggs, representing self; Robert Boluyt, representing self; Starr Costa, representing self; Bev Miller, representing self; Pam Derks, representing self; Gary Zimmerman, representing self; Camilla Strongin, AZ DEPT OF EDUCATION

Oppose:

Judith Robbins, representing self; Melissa Girmscheid, representing self

All Comments:

Shirley Dye, Self: Great idea to designate one "center" that only has one job, school safety. I like that districts MAY apply but are not required to apply. Rural AZ does not need to be forced into a program that only works for metro schools.; Starr Costa, Self: Center for school safety makes sense to me.; Bev Miller, Self: I am thoroughly in support of this bill since it will narrow the control of the security decisions to a small expert group instead of widening the power to many who are not expert. Safety for kids is paramount in my wishes.; Gary Zimmerman, Self: The plan seems a worthy way to support the safety of our students.

3, Sunset Review of the Credit Enhancement Eligibility Board

Support:

Jake Logan, AZ CHARTER SCHOOLS ASSN

4, Sunset Review of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

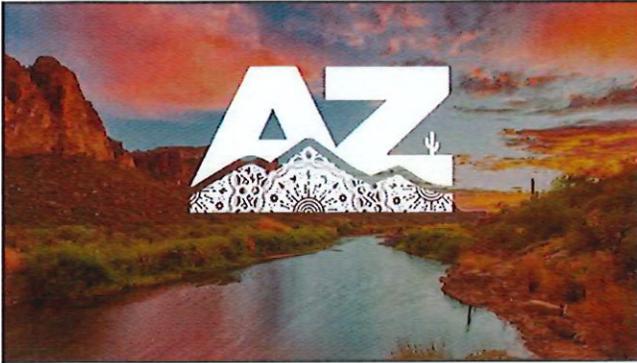
Testified in support:

Demaree Michelau, representing self; Todd Haynie, representing self

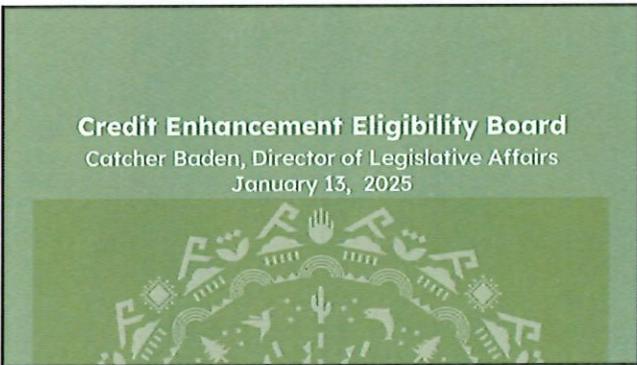
All Comments:

Todd Haynie, Self: WicheCommissioner

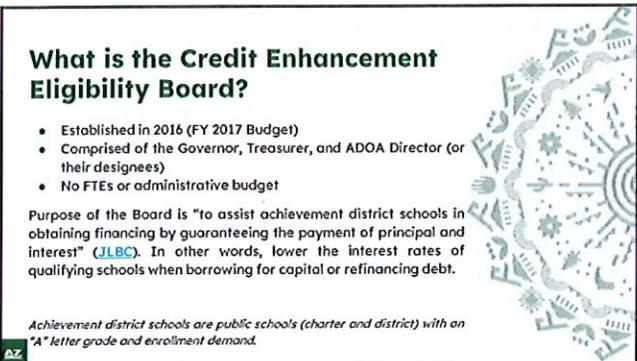
5, Review of the Arizona Department of Education – School Safety Program Performance Audit



1



2



3

How it Works

- In FY 2017, \$25.9m was transferred to the Arizona Public School Credit Enhancement Fund and the Board was authorized to use \$80m of program funding obligations from the Treasurer's operating fund balance
- This balance represents the guarantee that enhances schools' credit rating. Most of the credit ratings were enhanced from BB to AA- with interest rates between 2% and 5%
- Statute allows the Board to approve guaranteed financings up to \$350m



4

Approved Guaranteed Financings

- The Board approved 15 projects to 9 charter schools or charter operators.
- Of the 15, 12 were approved in the first 3 years. The other 3 were approved in 2020 and 2021.
- The Board is effectively at the maximum leverage amount of \$350m and has not considered or approved any new applications since 2021.



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Agency/Project Name	Year	Amount	Interest Rate	Term	Rating	Agency	Project
Arizona State University	2017	\$25.9m	2.5%	10	AA-	ASU	ASU
Arizona State University	2018	\$25.9m	2.5%	10	AA-	ASU	ASU
Arizona State University	2019	\$25.9m	2.5%	10	AA-	ASU	ASU
Arizona State University	2020	\$25.9m	2.5%	10	AA-	ASU	ASU
Arizona State University	2021	\$25.9m	2.5%	10	AA-	ASU	ASU



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Sunset Factors

- Current State of Affairs: Monitoring. The Board needs to meet if an approved school fails to meet its debt service obligation
- Eliminating the agency would mean the state would be unable to collect repayment from a school that defaults.
- Benefits of moving that function to another agency are negligible.
- Therefore, respectfully requesting a continuation of the Credit Enhancement Eligibility Board.



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Questions

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**ARIZONA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Fifty-seventh Legislature - Second Regular Session**

ROLL CALL VOTE

COMMITTEE ON Education BILL NO. Credit Enhancement Eligibility Board
 DATE January 13, 2026 MOTION: DP

	PASS	AYE	NAY	PRESENT	ABSENT
Abeytia		✓			
Biasiucci					✓
Fink		✓			
Garcia		✓			
Gutierrez		✓			
Hernandez L		✓			
Marshall		✓			
Olson		✓			
Rivero					✓
Simacek		✓			
Peña, Vice-Chairman		✓			
Gress, Chairman		✓			

APPROVED: 
 MATT GRESS, Chairman
 MICHELE PEÑA, Vice-Chairman


 COMMITTEE SECRETARY

ATT. Attachment 5

ACADEMIC YEAR 2024-25

\$30.3M

TOTAL SAVED
by Arizona students through WICHE Student Access Programs.

\$23.8M
SAVED
through WUE

\$2.6M
SAVED
through WRGP

\$3.9M
SAVED
through PSEP

WESTERN UNDERGRADUATE EXCHANGE



WUE
Saves **UNDERGRADUATE** students on out-of-state tuition. They pay no more than 150% of in-state tuition at partner institutions across the West.

Top Arizona WUE schools for out-of-state undergraduate students:

- ▶ Northern Arizona University (3,415)
- ▶ Mohave Community College (340)
- ▶ Arizona State University West Valley (268)

Top out-of-state WUE schools for Arizona undergraduate students:

- ▶ Fort Lewis College, CO (311)
- ▶ Utah Valley University (184)
- ▶ Colorado State University (160)

WESTERN REGIONAL GRADUATE PROGRAM



WRGP
Saves **GRADUATE** students on out-of-state certificate, master's, and doctoral programs. They pay no more than 150% of in-state tuition at partner institutions across the West.

Top Arizona WRGP schools for out-of-state graduate students:

- ▶ University of Arizona (175)
- ▶ Northern Arizona University (61)
- ▶ Arizona State University (17)

Top out-of-state WRGP schools for Arizona graduate students:

- ▶ University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (22)
- ▶ University of Colorado Denver (19)
- ▶ University of Idaho (15)

PROFESSIONAL STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAM



PSEP
Helps students pursuing careers in **10 HEALTH FIELDS**. They can enroll in programs in the WICHE region and receive substantial tuition support from their home state/territory.

138 Arizona students paid reduced tuition for health care studies not offered by public institutions in their home state.

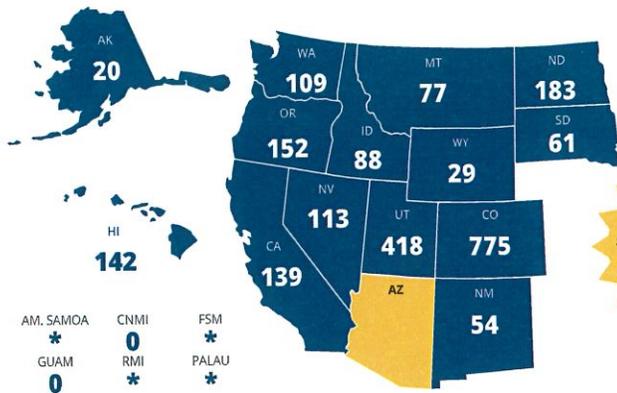
80% of Arizona's PSEP graduates returned home to practice (2012-16 for physicians, 2012-21 for all other fields). Students are contractually required to return.

Arizona institutions and their local economies benefit too. This year 167 PSEP students enrolled in programs located in Arizona. Institutions received \$4.1M in support fees to reduce the students' tuition costs.

740% ROI gained on Arizona's WICHE annual dues (\$169,000/FY 2025)

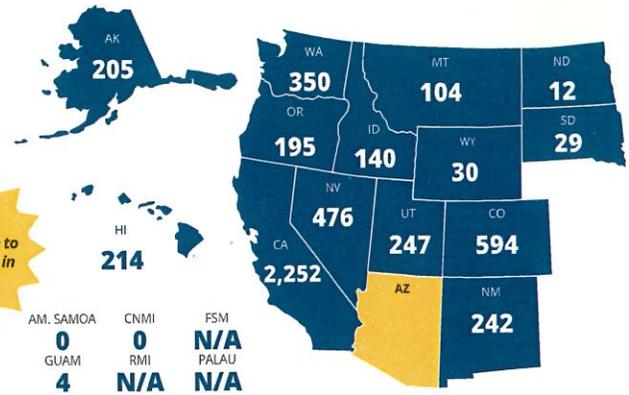
WUE

WUE STUDENTS FROM ARIZONA: **2,360**



5,094 WUE students chose to attend college in Arizona

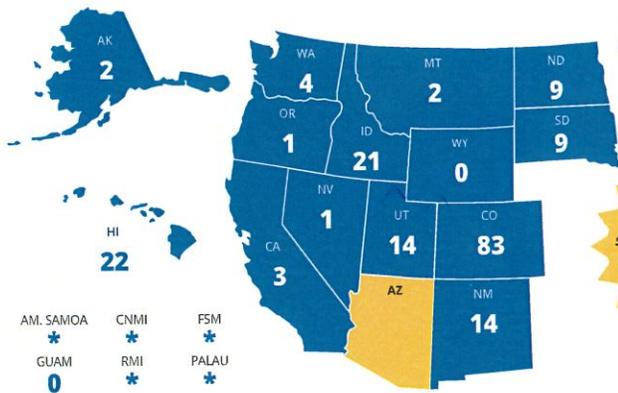
WUE STUDENTS TO ARIZONA: **5,094**



* Currently do not have any participating WUE schools.

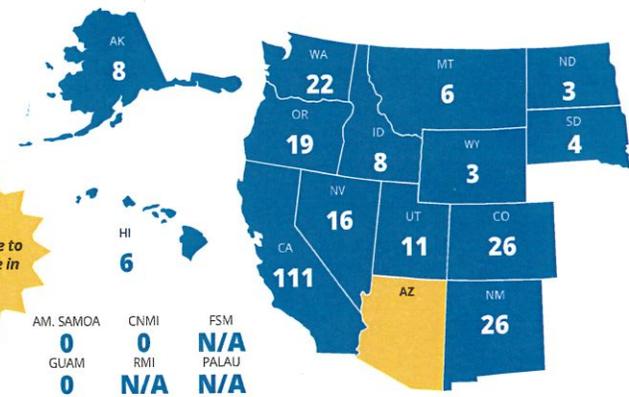
WRGP

WRGP STUDENTS FROM ARIZONA: **185**



269 WRGP students chose to attend college in Arizona

WRGP STUDENTS TO ARIZONA: **269**



* Currently do not have any participating WRGP schools.

PSEP

FIELD	STUDENTS	FEES PAID
Dentistry	45	\$1,385,368
Optometry	18	\$360,063
Osteopathic Medicine	43	\$1,100,800
Podiatry	3	\$53,250
Veterinary Medicine	29	\$1,026,600
TOTAL	138	\$3,926,081

PSEP students from Arizona saved \$3,926,081 in tuition

WHAT STUDENTS ARE SAYING



"WRGP and WUE have enabled me to study architecture across diverse landscapes, from Idaho's fire lookout towers to Arizona's adobe thermal masses. By reducing financial obstacles, these programs have expanded my educational horizons and provided crucial opportunities for my academic and professional growth."

STEVEN, Washington resident, Architecture, University of Arizona

Regional collaboration

WICHE brings together senior academic leaders to foster dialogue about issues facing individual institutions through its leadership and professional development networks.

WESTERN ALLIANCE OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE ACADEMIC LEADERS – 2-YEAR INSTITUTIONS

- ▶ Chandler-Gilbert Community College
- ▶ Eastern Arizona College
- ▶ Estrella Mountain Community College
- ▶ Gateway Community College
- ▶ Glendale Community College
- ▶ Maricopa Community Colleges
- ▶ Mesa Community College
- ▶ Paradise Valley Community College
- ▶ Phoenix College
- ▶ Rio Salado College
- ▶ Scottsdale Community College
- ▶ South Mountain Community College

Bettina Celas, Maricopa Community Colleges, is a member of the Alliance executive committee.

WESTERN ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP FORUM – 4-YEAR INSTITUTIONS

- ▶ University of Arizona
- ▶ Northern Arizona University

John Georgas, Northern Arizona University, is a member of the Forum executive committee.

WESTERN ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP ACADEMY is a yearlong professional development program for academic leaders aspiring to become chief academic officers in the WICHE region's postsecondary sector. Two cohort members from Arizona institutions have participated in the Academy since its inception in 2015.

WICHE offers student health and technology contracts through a **COST-SAVINGS PROGRAM** with the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) to colleges and universities, K-12 school districts, local and state municipalities, and nonprofit organizations with an education emphasis. Last year, entities that used these contracts saved 9% over what they otherwise would have outside this joint purchasing arrangement. The total savings in Arizona was \$351,427.

Optimal behavioral health care

WICHE Behavioral Health Program (BHP) partners with the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System to support fidelity reviews of four evidence-based practices (EPBs) in the **MARICOPA COUNTY PUBLIC**

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SYSTEM. These four evidence-based practices are also being reviewed across the balance of the state. WICHE BHP employs and supports the project lead and six fidelity reviewers.

WICHE BHP also collaborates with **MERCY CARE ARIZONA** to support the expansion of competence and evidence-based practices in trauma informed treatment.

TOGETHER WITH VETERANS (TWV) – RURAL VETERAN SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAM enlists rural Veterans and local partners to reduce Veteran suicide in their own community. Funded by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and administered by the WICHE BHP, TWV provides individualized coaching, tools, training, technical assistance, and resources, supporting 16 total communities in the WICHE region, representing 11 Western states. The TWV program supports three communities in Arizona, serving nearly 750 Veterans.

RURAL COMMUNITIES OPIOID RESPONSE PROGRAM (RCORP) is a multiyear initiative supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to identify treatment barriers and best practices for preventing and treating substance use disorder. In Arizona, RCORP supports three grantees.

Sound public policy

Arizona participates in the **STATE AUTHORIZATION RECIPROcity AGREEMENT (SARA)** through WICHE. This voluntary agreement provides reciprocity for the state authorization of distance education. WICHE Commissioners have been strong advocates for protecting the state voice in important governance decisions affecting this agreement and staff continue to support participating states and improving student protections while bolstering access.

Created by the WICE Commission in 1995, the **LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (LAC)** works to strengthen state-level postsecondary policymaking across the West. Members are legislators appointed by each state, territory, or freely associated state in the WICHE region; they meet annually to explore emerging policy issues and develop strategies for interstate collaboration.

KNOCKING AT THE COLLEGE DOOR is the leading U.S. resource for projections of high school graduates. Released in December 2024, the newest edition is essential for postsecondary

policymakers, planning and workforce efforts, and economic development. Visit wiche.edu/knocking to access reports, interactive dashboards, webinars, presentations, as well as state-level data.

DATA EXPERTS WICHE staff provide analysis on finance, financial aid, articulation and transfer, strategic planning, student demographics, and more, as well as host peer-to-peer calls of state, system, and institutional chief academic officers to identify areas of potential collaboration and resource sharing across the West.

DATA RESOURCES WICHE offers curated data and policy resources to support better-informed decision-making. WICHE's research projects and collaborations cover postsecondary completion, health workforce development, behavioral health in postsecondary education, open educational resources (OER), state finance, prior learning assessment, and more.

- ▶ **Tuition and Fees in the West** includes tuition, fees, and enrollment data about 350+ public institutions in the West.
- ▶ **Benchmarks: WICHE Region** presents information on the West's progress in improving access to, success in, and financing of higher education.
- ▶ Data on over 35 indicators in WICHE's **Regional Fact Book for Higher Education in the West**.

CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICERS NETWORK Staff from the Arizona Board of Regents also participate in regular collaborative calls with colleagues around the region.

Innovative solutions

WCET - THE WICHE COOPERATIVE FOR EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGIES is the leader in the practice, policy, and advocacy of digital learning in

higher education. Its growing membership includes institutions, higher education agencies and systems, nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and corporations in all U.S. states and several Canadian provinces. WCET members include:

- ▶ Arizona State University
- ▶ Coconino Community College
- ▶ Grand Canyon University
- ▶ Mesa Community College
- ▶ Midwestern University
- ▶ Northern Arizona University
- ▶ Pima Community College
- ▶ Prescott College
- ▶ Rio Salado College
- ▶ University of Arizona
- ▶ University of Phoenix

Melody Buckner, University of Arizona, serves on the WCET Steering Committee.

STATE AUTHORIZATION NETWORK (SAN) helps guide institutions through state regulations around online courses and programs. SAN members include:

- ▶ Arizona State University
- ▶ Grand Canyon University
- ▶ Midwestern University
- ▶ Northern Arizona University
- ▶ Prescott College
- ▶ Rio Salado College
- ▶ University of Phoenix

WICHE has convened the **OERWEST NETWORK**, which is part of a nationwide collaborative to scale the development and adoption of free course materials. Open educational resources (OER) have shown promise in improving student outcomes, particularly for students whom the high cost of textbooks can be a barrier to postsecondary success.

Arizona Commissioners



Kathleen Goepfinger
President Emeritus,
Midwestern University



Todd Haynie
President, Eastern
Arizona College



Chad Sampson
Executive Director,
Arizona Board of
Regents

Legislative Advisory Committee

Vacancy

WICHE.EDU

**ARIZONA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Fifty-seventh Legislature - Second Regular Session**

ROLL CALL VOTE

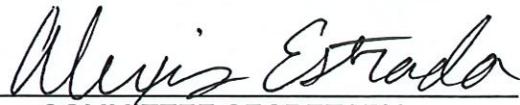
COMMITTEE ON Education BILL NO. WICHE

DATE January 13, 2026 MOTION: DP

	PASS	AYE	NAY	PRESENT	ABSENT
Abeytia		✓			
Biasiucci					✓
Fink		✓			
Garcia		✓			
Gutierrez		✓			
Hernandez L		✓			
Marshall		✓			
Olson		✓			
Rivero		✓			
Simacek		✓			
Peña, Vice-Chairman		✓			
Gress, Chairman		✓			

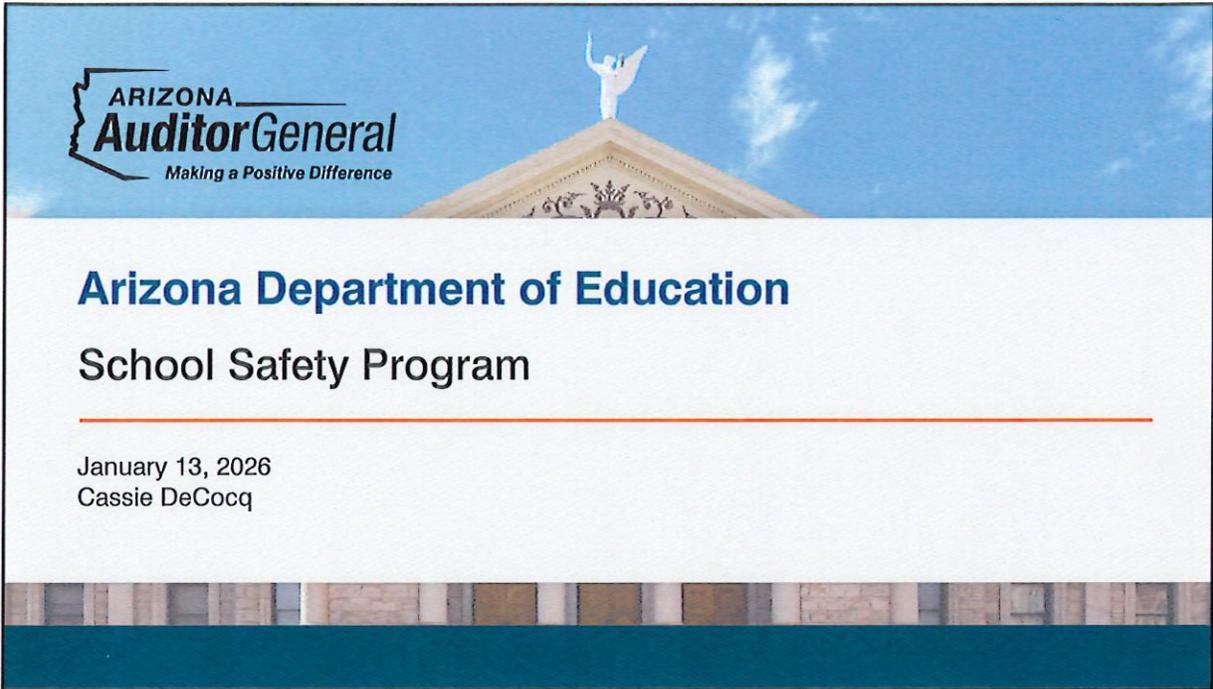
APPROVED: 

 MATT GRESS, Chairman
 MICHELE PEÑA, Vice-Chairman



 COMMITTEE SECRETARY

Attachment 7



Mister Chair, members of the committee:

My name is Cassie DeCocq, and I'm with the Arizona Auditor General. Today I'll present key information from our audit of the Arizona Department of Education's School Safety Program, which we issued in August 2025. Although I won't cover everything from our report, I am available to answer any questions you have about the information in the report at the end of my presentation.

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

- ▶ Key context
- ▶ Department's positive performance
- ▶ Problems identified
- ▶ Why the problems matter
- ▶ What led to the problems
- ▶ Key recommendations
- ▶ Additional information

My presentation will include key context for our audit and the Department's School Safety Program, information on positive performance we identified, and an overview of our findings, including problems we identified, why these problems matter, factors that led to the problems, and key recommendations to address them. Finally, I'll end my presentation by providing some additional information related to the School Safety Program that we present in our report.

KEY CONTEXT

School Safety Program history and purpose

- ▶ Statute established the Program to enhance safe and effective learning environments by providing grant monies to schools for placing school safety personnel on school campuses
 - ▶ Program originally established in 1994 to place officers in schools
 - ▶ Program expanded in 2019 to include school counselors and social workers

- ▶ Public school districts and charter schools can participate in the Program

Statute establishes the School Safety Program within the Department to promote and enhance safe and effective learning environments by providing grant monies to schools for the purpose of placing school safety personnel on school campuses.

The Program was originally established in 1994 to support the placement of school resource officers (SROs) and juvenile probation officers on school campuses, and was expanded in 2019 to include school counselors and social workers.

Both public school districts and charter schools can participate in the Program.

KEY CONTEXT

Department's key responsibilities related to the Program

- ▶ Reviewing schools' Program applications
- ▶ Selecting schools for participation in the Program based on school safety needs
- ▶ Distributing grant monies to participating schools
- ▶ Evaluating and reporting on the Program's effectiveness

The Department's key statutory responsibilities related to the Program include:

- Reviewing schools' Program applications;
- Selecting schools for participation in the Program based on school safety needs,
- Distributing grant monies to participating schools; and
- Evaluating and reporting on the Program's effectiveness.

KEY CONTEXT

Program awards and funding have grown since FY 2018

	2018	2020	2023	2025
Funded positions	113	383	869	1,086
Schools served	128	424	928	1,153
Total awarded (millions)	\$12.0	\$32.0	\$84.5	\$128.3

Arizona Auditor General

Making a positive difference by promoting better government

As shown in the table on the slide, the number of schools awarded Program grant monies has grown substantially since fiscal year 2018. In fiscal year 2025, the Department awarded \$128.3 million in Program monies to 1,153 schools to place 1,086 school resource officers, school counselors, and other school safety personnel on school campuses.

We identified 2 factors that contributed to this growth--the Program was expanded to include school counselors and social workers and legislative appropriations for the Program increased in fiscal year 2023.

POSITIVE PERFORMANCE

Department took some steps to support Program's success

- ▶ Established Program requirements for participating schools that are intended to enhance school safety personnel effectiveness and improve school safety
 - ▶ Training staff
 - ▶ Implementing an operational plan to identify and address safety risks
- ▶ Contracted to help place off-duty officers on campuses

We found that the Department has taken some steps to help support the Program's success.

For example, the Department:

- Established Program requirements for participating schools that are intended to enhance school safety personnel effectiveness and improve school safety, such as training staff and implementing an operational plan to identify and address safety risks; and
- The Department also contracted with a third party to coordinate the placement of off duty officers on school campuses.

PROBLEM IDENTIFIED

Department did not ensure that schools we reviewed complied with all Program requirements

- ▶ 11 schools either did not develop a required operational plan or had an incomplete operational plan
- ▶ 13 schools did not meet Safety Team requirements
- ▶ 5 schools had personnel who did not complete the Department's required annual training
- ▶ 5 schools lacked required school safety personnel activity logs

However, our review of 16 schools awarded a grant for a school safety position found that the Department did not ensure that 15 of them complied with 1 or more Program requirements.

-Specifically, the Department requires participating schools to develop operational plans to help ensure they identify, prioritize, and address safety risks, but 11 schools either did not develop an operational plan or had an incomplete operational plan. -Additionally, we found that 13 schools we reviewed did not meet Safety Team requirements, including some schools not establishing a Safety Team and other schools having a Safety Team but not implementing some required Safety Team activities. Safety Teams are responsible for monitoring the schools' operational plan.

-We also found that 5 schools had 1 or more personnel, such as an officer, school principal, or law enforcement supervisor, who did not complete the Department's required annual training.

-Further, we found that 5 schools lacked required activity logs for school safety personnel funded with Program monies. The activity logs should include information to demonstrate school safety personnel are used for their intended purpose of enhancing school safety.

PROBLEM IDENTIFIED

Department made payments to some schools that did not submit expenditure reports

- ▶ Ex: Department reimbursed 1 school more than \$43,000 in FY 2022 without receiving and reviewing expenditure reports

Finally, we found that the Department made payments to some schools that did not submit expenditure reports with their requests for reimbursement.

- For example, our review of reimbursement requests submitted to the Department in fiscal year 2022 found that the Department reimbursed 1 school more than \$43,000 for a school counselor without receiving any expenditure reports from the school that would have provided the specific payment amounts supporting the counselor's annual salary and benefits.

WHY THE PROBLEM MATTERS

Not complying with Program requirements could limit schools' ability to enhance school safety personnel effectiveness and improve school safety

- ▶ Schools without complete operational plans:
 - ▶ May be unaware of and thus unable to prioritize and address safety risks
 - ▶ May not be using the funded school safety positions to their full potential
- ▶ School personnel without required training may not be prepared to effectively work with students
- ▶ Schools not completing required Safety Team activities may not identify and make needed school safety improvements

Arizona Auditor General

Making a positive difference by promoting better government

Not complying with Program requirements could limit schools' ability to enhance school safety personnel effectiveness and improve school safety. For example:

- Absent the required operational plans, schools were at risk of being unaware of and thus unable to prioritize and address their most pressing safety risks and may not be using the funded school safety positions to their full potential. In contrast, as part of our review we also found that an elementary school in the Program that did develop and implement an operational plan with all required components made meaningful safety improvements.
- Without required training, personnel may not be prepared to effectively work with students. For example, an officer from 1 school did not complete the required new officer training, which includes instruction and information on child development, trauma responsive practices, working with students with special needs, and officer expectations.
- By not establishing Safety Teams and completing the required Safety Team activities, schools may not identify and make needed school safety improvements. In contrast, all 3 schools we reviewed that established Safety Teams that met at least quarterly as required to discuss safety-needs assessment data and priority safety areas made school safety improvements, such as developing improved lockdown procedures.

WHY THE PROBLEM MATTERS

Department making payments to schools that did not submit expenditure reports increases risk that program monies were spent inappropriately

Arizona Auditor General

Making a positive difference by promoting better government

- Finally, the Department making payments to schools that did not submit expenditure reports, increases the risk that Program monies were spent inappropriately.

WHAT LED TO THIS PROBLEM

Multiple factors contributed to this issue

- ▶ Department did not conduct some monitoring activities
 - ▶ Relied mainly on schools providing written acknowledgments of compliance with Program requirements
 - ▶ Department reported it reduced some of its Program monitoring processes in response to the significant increase in the number of awarded school safety positions since FY 2020
- ▶ Department lacked sufficient guidance for schools submitting reimbursement requests and for Department staff who reviewed these requests in FYs 2022 and 2023

Multiple factors contributed to the Department not ensuring schools complied with Program requirements. Specifically:

- The Department did not conduct some monitoring activities and instead relied mainly on schools providing written acknowledgments of compliance with Program requirements.
- Additionally, the Department reported it had reduced some of its monitoring processes for the Program in response to the significant increase in the number of awarded school safety positions since fiscal year 2020.
- Lastly, in fiscal years 2022 and 2023, the Department lacked sufficient guidance for schools submitting reimbursement requests and for Department staff who review these requests, which may have contributed to the Department making payments to some schools that did not submit expenditure reports.

RECOMMENDATIONS OVERVIEW

5 recommendations to the Department, including:

- ▶ Monitor schools receiving Program monies to ensure they comply with Program requirements
- ▶ Develop and implement written policies and procedures for monitoring schools' compliance with Program requirements
- ▶ Continue to review schools' Program reimbursement requests to ensure they are supported by expenditure reports prior to approving payment

We made 5 recommendations to the Department, including recommendations to:

- Monitor schools receiving Program monies to ensure they comply with Program requirements, such as by conducting risk assessments and site visits, and work with schools to address any identified noncompliance;
- Develop and implement written policies and procedures for monitoring schools' compliance with Program requirements; and
- Continue to review schools Program reimbursement requests to ensure they are supported by expenditure reports prior to approving the payment.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

School Safety Program Questions and Answers

- ▶ Legislation enacted in 2025 revised statutory Program provisions
 - ▶ Authorizes schools to use Program monies to purchase safety technology and make safety-related infrastructure improvements
 - ▶ Allows retired law enforcement to fill officer positions
- ▶ Legislation added various Program requirements
 - ▶ Schools must contract with a school safety assessment provider every 5 years to assess physical security and review emergency operations plan
 - ▶ Department must compile a list of approved school safety assessment providers

Our report also includes a questions-and-answers section that provides additional information related to the School Safety Program, such as the Program's grant-awarding criteria, efforts to fill officer positions, outreach activities, and Legislation enacted in 2025 that impacted the Program. Specifically:

- Legislation enacted in 2025 revised statutory Program provisions, including:
 - Authorizing schools to use Program monies to purchase safety technology and make infrastructure improvements related to school safety; and
 - Allowing retired law enforcement officers to fill officer positions.
- The Legislation also added various Program requirements, such as:
 - Schools participating in the Program must contract with a school safety assessment provider every 5 years to assess each school's physical security and review its emergency operations plan; and
 - The Department must compile a list of approved school safety assessment providers.

Lastly, our report includes an Appendix with information on estimated per student spending for school safety personnel for Arizona and 8 other states.



Arizona Department of Education

School Safety Program

January 13, 2026
Cassie DeCocq

The Department agreed with our findings and plans to implement all our recommendations. We will report on the status of the Department's efforts to implement the recommendations in our 6-month follow-up report that we plan to initiate later this month.

Mister Chair, members of the committee, this concludes my presentation. I am available to answer questions you may have.

School Safety Program

House Education Committee of Reference
January 13, 2026



1

Training on Managing Crisis Situations

- School Safety & Threat Mitigation
- Reunification
- Suicide Prevention
 - Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR)
 - SafeTalk
- Supporting Students with Disabilities in Emergencies/Drills
- Relationships & Community Engagement
- Barriers to Bullying



2

School Safety Program Training Team



SchoolSafety@doe.wisconsin.gov

 Dr. Cathy Johnson SIP Training Director	 Kevin Wach Program Specialist	 Andrei Neg Program Specialist	 Lisa Fremstad Program Specialist	 William Walker Program Specialist	 Emery Madison Program Specialist
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3

Making a Difference in School Safety

ADE/ASU Evaluation Findings

School Counselors and Social Workers help to foster safe school environments by strengthening connections between school, family, and community as well as connecting with students and identifying their needs for success.



7

Making a Difference in School Safety

ADE/ASU Governor's Report Findings

How SSP-funded positions contribute to school safety:

- Positive role models
- Prevention specialists
- Supporting access to community resources
- Law-Related Education
- Mental health support and behavior-based programs.



8

Thank you.

Michael J. Kurtenbach
Director of School Safety



9



ARIZONA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

57th Legislature, 2nd Regular Session

Majority Research Staff

HB 2142: ADE; school safety; center; programs

Sponsor: Representative Gress, LD 4

Committee on Education

Overview

Creates the School Safety Center (Center) within the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) and details the duties of the Center, which include administering the School Safety Program (Program).

History

Established within ADE, the Program supports the costs of: 1) placing school resource officers, juvenile probation officers, school safety officers, school counselors and school social workers on school campuses; and 2) purchasing safety technology, safety training and infrastructure improvements for school campuses. ADE, subject to review and approval by the State Board of Education, must distribute monies to participating school districts and charter schools that are in compliance with Program requirements (A.R.S. § 15-154).

A school district or charter school that receives Program monies must develop an emergency response plan and contract with a school safety assessment provider to conduct a school safety assessment every five years. ADE is required to compile a list of approved school safety assessment providers. Every three years, ADE must select a random sample of school districts and charter schools participating in the Program and conduct a safety assessment of the selected school districts and charter schools (A.R.S. § 15-154.02).

A school district governing board and the charter of a charter school must ensure that an emergency response plan is developed for each school in conjunction with local law enforcement and emergency response agencies and in accordance with the minimum standards developed by ADE and the Department of Emergency and Military Affairs. The plan must address how the school and emergency responders will communicate with and assist students with disabilities (A.R.S. §§ 15-183 and 15-341).

Provisions

1. Establishes the Center within ADE that must:
 - a. use school safety subject matter expertise to identify best practices for enhancing schools safety;
 - b. provide statewide training and professional development to school safety personnel;
 - c. administer the Program;
 - d. provide technical assistance to school districts and charter schools for the development of Program proposals and emergency response plans;
 - e. research and evaluate school safety programs, initiatives and outcomes;

<input type="checkbox"/> Prop 105 (45 votes)	<input type="checkbox"/> Prop 108 (40 votes)	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergency (40 votes)	<input type="checkbox"/> Fiscal Note
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- f. conduct school safety risk assessments; and
 - g. adopt guidelines for threat prevention, vulnerability mitigation and physical campus security planning. (Sec. 4)
2. Specifies the Center may offer specific recommendations to a school based on the findings of a risk assessment that is conducted. (Sec. 4)
 3. Places the Program within the Center and tasks the Center with administering the Program. (Sec. 1)
 4. Authorizes the Center to use up to 10% of monies appropriated for the Program annually for Program administration costs. (Sec. 1)
 5. Specifies the Center, rather than more generally ADE, must:
 - a. compile a list of approved school safety assessment providers; and
 - b. select, every three years, a random sample of school districts and charter schools participating in the Program and conduct a safety assessment of the selected school districts and charter schools. (Sec. 2)
 6. Makes technical and conforming changes. (Sec. 1, 2, 3)

ARIZONA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Fifty-seventh Legislature - Second Regular Session

ROLL CALL VOTE

COMMITTEE ON Education BILL NO. HB 2142

DATE January 13, 2026 MOTION: DP

	PASS	AYE	NAY	PRESENT	ABSENT
Abeytia	✓		✓		
Biasiucci		✓			
Fink		✓			
Garcia				✓	
Gutierrez			✓		
Hernandez L			✓		
Marshall		✓			
Olson					✓
Rivero		✓			
Simacek			✓		
Peña, Vice-Chairman		✓			
Gress, Chairman		✓			
		6	4	1	1

Alexis Estrada
 COMMITTEE SECRETARY

APPROVED:

 MATT GRESS, Chairman
 MICHELE PEÑA, Vice-Chairman

Attachment 11